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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1401

INFO RUEHDL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE

RUCNSOM/SOMALIA COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE

RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE

RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE

RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 NAIROBI 002241

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DEPT FOR AF/E AND A/S CARSON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/15/2019

TAGS: PGOV PREL KDEM EAID PTER SO

SUBJECT: SOMALIA - PM PREVIEWS EUROPEAN TRIP, HEARS OUR MESSAGE ON POLITICAL, SECURITY PROGRESS

Classified By: Political Officer Joe Trimble, reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

¶11. (SBU) Summary: Embassy Nairobi Somalia Unit met with Somalia Transitional Federal Government (TFG) Prime Minister Sharmarke on Sunday, October 25 to discuss key issues on Somalia prior to the PM's departure for meetings in London with the FCO and Brussels with the EU and donor community. USAID East Africa Director Bob Heller and one member of the USAID Somalia team were also present. The Somalia Unit discussed with Sharmarke greater TFG communication with the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), the need for TFG troops to remain unified upon return from USG-supported training, TFG views of the Joint Security Committee (JSC), and U.S. willingness to engage on current obstacles to TFG access to European Union budgetary support. End Summary.

TFG Communication with AMISOM Critical

¶12. (SBU) The Somalia Unit raised strong concerns about reported poor communication between TFG and AMISOM in Mogadishu. We harkened back to recent AMISOM complaints that the PM had publicly condemned AMISOM shelling in Mogadishu, without consulting AMISOM beforehand. A simple phone call alerting AMISOM of the forthcoming remarks would have gone a long way to assuage AMISOM's view that it was unfairly criticized, we asserted. In the wake of AMISOM's October 19 shelling of civilian areas, we warned the PM to inform AMISOM before he discussed the shelling publicly.

¶13. (SBU) Sharmarke agreed that the TFG and AMISOM must improve communications efforts, especially between African Union (AU) and TFG working level security officials in Mogadishu, but also in Nairobi. Communication at higher levels was better, the PM claimed: both he and President Sheikh Sharif regularly consult AMISOM. However, Sharmarke offered, the AU badly needs political officers in Mogadishu and should be working to identify a replacement for AU mission head Nicholas Bwakira when he reportedly steps down in late November. We noted that while the AU removed some staff following the September 17 suicide bombing at the airport, AU political officers were expected to return.

Message Delivered: Don't Separate TFG
Troops Upon Return from U.S.-supported Training

¶4. (C) We underscored Washington's strong concerns that TFG troops trained with U.S. support are sometimes divided up between the TFG forces and the personal security teams of some TFG ministers. Assuring proper chain of command is essential to continued U.S. support for any training effort, whether Ugandan or Djiboutian, given the importance we place in vetting this chain of command for potential past human rights violations. We cautioned that we are not able to provide support to TFG command structures that have not been Leahy vetted. (Note: Per AF/FO request, the Somalia Unit will follow up with Somalia Ambassador Mohamed Ali Nur "Americo" to have a written, signed TFG commitment not to split TFG troops who have received U.S.-supported training. End note.)

...And Then What About Political Outreach?

¶5. (C) Sharmarke agreed that political progress was as important as security, but would only loosely refer to the TFG's "plan" for reaching out to the Juba and Bay/Bakol regions. These regions, along with Hiraan, according to Sharmarke, need a "bigger" approach. Sharmarke indicated only that the TFG wishes to discuss these plans more internally before sharing with the international community. The Somalia Unit reiterated that regional outreach, such as visits by prominent TFG members to the Hiraan region, would send strong signals of engagement to political allies in the field and are within the TFG's capacity. For example, we pointed out that chartered flights from Mogadishu to any of

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the regions are less expensive than the TFG leadership's all-too-frequent international trips. (Note: though we are not certain, we believe the TFG pays for much of its international travel. End Note). Sharmarke countered that the TFG is reaching out to Hiran and plans on sending money to TFG officials there. Sharmarke also referenced requests made to Ethiopia to provide ammunition to border regions; however, on that score, Sharmarke reports the Ethiopians are pressuring the TFG to recognize and partner with Al Sunaa Whal Jamma (ASWJ), something the TFG is not yet ready to pursue formally.

Confirming TFG Support for the
Joint Security Committee (JSC)

¶6. (SBU) Sharmarke confirmed that the TFG is quite vested in the JSC, but was struggling to determine with whom and how to engage on JSC work. With the results of the U.S. co-led SSA anticipated in mid-November, the SSA team is working with the Djibouti Peace Process-mandated JSC to filter action items and recommendations to TFG leadership. However, the we expressed concern to the PM that some TFG interlocutors, including the Ministers of Defense and of Post and Telecommunications, have doubts about the SSA's utility. Separately, at the October 19 JSC meeting, the PM publicly agreed that the SSA is useful and will guide TFG plans for its security sector's reform. (Comment: Nevertheless, the Somalia Unit sees growing indications that SSA recommendations are not being delivered to PM Sharmarke by the Ministers of Defense or Interior, or by the Head of Internal Security, indicating there might not be sufficient or appropriate TFG buy-in at the Ministerial level. The SSA team in Nairobi will continue to engage with ministers, the PM, and the President to ensure all appropriate TFG representatives are informed. The Somalia Unit will continue to monitor. End Comment.)

Overcoming an Obstacle to EU
Budget Support: Cotonou Membership

¶7. (SBU) In our meeting with the PM, and separately at a dinner EU representatives hosted for the PM on October 24, we offered to engage with the European Union (EU) over claims that bilateral EU aid is stymied over Somalia's non-signatory status in the Cotonou Agreement, a regulatory economic treaty related to international assistance. The PM explained that Somalia intends to accede to Cotonou, but the process typically takes at least two years. The TFG, and our EU counterparts, suggested the United States could urge EU leaders to find a solution to help Somalia as the accession process progresses.

Comment

¶8. (C) Sharmarke was typically subdued and brief in his questions and responses. The TFG/AMISOM communication gap is a significant issue and one that we hope will be rectified as we continue to underscore its importance with TFG leadership, but meanwhile it is contributing to significant mistrust issues between the two organizations. We must be realistic in our understanding that the TFG might be willing to sign a letter of understanding that it will not separate troops who have received U.S.-supported training, but this does not guarantee such agreements will be or can be adhered to in an environment where there is no U.S. presence, limited ability to verify such details, and a chaotic security environment. Sharmarke's inability to articulate a regional outreach approach at this point in his tenure is cause for concern, although not surprising. We must continue to underscore the need for regional TFG outreach to capitalize on popular sentiment against al Shabaab throughout Somalia. The role of the JSC in Somalia will be as important as the TFG wishes it to be, but we must approach our security assistance cautiously as a transparent JSC is a symbol of actual TFG

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buy-in to this otherwise internationally-led construct. The emergence of the Cotonou Agreement as the latest obstacle to direct EU assistance for the TFG is one we are gathering more information on and will provide to USEU and AF/E counterparts as we learn more. End comment.

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